

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 15809

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJECT: MRS. GANDHI ORGANIZES TO COMBAT J.P. NARAYAN

REF: NEW DELHI 15147

SUMMARY: MRS. GANDHI USED A NOVEMBER 22-24 CONGRESS PARTY CONFERENCE TO CLARIFY HER PARTY'S OPPOSITION TO J.P. NARAYAN'S GROWING MOVEMENT AND TO CONTRAST CONGRESS PROGRESSIVISM WITH THE CONSERVATIVE POLICIES ESPOUSED BY NARAYAN'S RIGHT-WING ALLIES. THE CONFERENCE CONCIDES WITH PRESENT EFFORTS BY THE OPPOSITION PARTIES TO FORMALIZE CLOSER TIES WITH NARAYAN FOR THEIR OWN ENDS. IN APPARENT COORDINATION WITH ITS ALLIES IN CONGRESS, THE CPI IS SEEKING TO EXACERBATE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MRS. GANDHI AND NARAYAN'S ANTI-CPI SYMPATHIZERS IN CONGRESS. THE NARORA RESOLUTION AND MRS. GANDHI'S APPARENT ATTEMPT TO POLITICIZE THE CONTEXT OF HER CONFRONTATION WITH NARAYAN PROVIDE FURTHER GRIST FOR SPECULATION THAT MRS. GANDHI MAY CALL ELECTIONS NEXT

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SPRING. END SUMMARY.

1. SEARCHING FOR A PRAGMATIC AND GENERALLY ACCEPTABLE BASIS ON WHICH TO ORGANIZE CONGRESS PARTY RESISTANCE TO JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN'S MOVEMENT (REFLET), 117 LEADING CONGRESSMEN WITHDREW TO A CONGRESS "CAMP" IN THE SMALL UTTAR PRADESH TOWN OF NARORA, 90 MILES FROM DELHI, FROM NOVEMBER 22-24. MRS. GANDHI, UNION CABINET MINISTERS, CHIEF MINISTERS AND THE CONGRESS TOP BRASS ATTENDED.

2. A CLEAR POLICY OF CONFRONTATION WITH NARAYAN AND HIS OPPOSITION ALLIES EMERGED FROM THE USUAL MIXTURE OF "SOCIALIST" RHETORIC AND AMBITIOUS RESOLUTIONS (COMPLETE WITH TIME FRAMES) PRODUCED AT THE CONFERENCE. MRS. GANDHI SKILLFULLY REFRAINED FROM ATTACKING NARAYAN PERSONALLY. SHE INSTEAD CAST THE CONFRONTATION IN THE CONTEXT OF IDEOLOGICAL COMPETITION BETWEEN PROGRESSIVE CONGRESS POLICIES AND REACTIONARY POLICIES SPONSORED BY RIGHT-WING GROUPS INTERESTED IN ACCOMPLISHING THROUGH NARAYAN WHAT THEY COULD NOT AT THE POLLS.

3. FOLLOWING MRS. GANDHI'S SPEECH, LEFTIST CONGRESS PRESIDENT BAROOAH AND PRO-CPI ELEMENTS IN CONGRESS USED THE ROSTRUM TO ATTACK NARAYAN PERSONALLY AND TO CRITICIZE THE STRONG, MOSTLY ANTI-CPI BLOC IN CONGRESS SYMPATHETIC TO NARAYAN, SYMBOLIZED BY "YOUNG TURK" CHANDERSHEKAR. THE ENSUING DEBATE, WHICH MRS. GANDHI DID NOT ENTER, APPEARS TO HAVE SOLIDIFIED THE SHARP DIFFERENCES OVER NARAYAN'S MOVEMENT WITHIN CONGRESS.

4. MRS. GANDHI'S EFFORT TO SET NARAYAN'S MOVEMENT IN A FIRM POLITICAL FRAMEWORK CONCIDES WITH PRESENT EFFORTS BY THE OPPOSITION TO FORMALIZE CLOSER TIES WITH NARAYAN FOR THEIR OWN ENDS. AFTER AN INTENSIVE SERIES OF CONVERSTATIONS WITH INDIVIDUAL OPPOSITION LEADERS NOVEMBER 21-24, NARAYAN WILL NOW CHAIR A NOVEMBER 25AWY MEETING OF ALL INTERESTED OPPOSITION PARTY LEADERS IN NEW DELHI TO DISCUSS COOPERATION. THE JANA SANGH LEADER IN THE LOK SABHA RECENTLY TOLD AN EMBOFF THAT DURING THE MEETING HIS PARTY HOPES TO ORGANIZE A FEDERATION OF OPPOSITION PARTIES BEHIND NARAYAN AS A NATIONAL ALTER-  
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NATIVE TO MRS. GANDHI.

5. THE CPI IS ALSO REALIGNING ITS STRATEGY TO EXHBIT THE GROWING SIGNIFICANCE OF NARAYAN'S MOVEMENT. LIKE ITS ALLIES IN CONGRESS, IT HOPES TO EXACERBATE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MRS. GANDHI AND THE LARGE PRO-NARAYAN GROUP IN CONGRESS AND TO INCREASE THE PRIME MINISTER'S DEPENDENCE ON THE CONGRESS "LEFT". A NOVEMBER 22-24 CONFERENCE OF THE APPROXIMATELY 111-MEMBER NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE CPI DICIDED TO INCREAS THE PARTY 'S ASSOCIATION WITH

"PROGRESSIVE" CONGRESS STATE GOVERNMENTS AS A CONCRETE STEP IN THIS DIRECTION.

6. MRS. GANDHI'S ATTEMPT AT NARORA TO HIGHLIGHT NARAYAN'S ASSOCIATION WITH HIS OPPOSITION (MOSTLY RIGHT-WING) ALLIES COULD POSE PROBLEMS FOR HIS MOVEMENT'S CONTINUED SUCCESS. TO DATE, HE HAS SOUGHT SUCCESSFULLY TO DRAW ON OPPOSITION SUPPORT WHILE REMAINING ALOOF FROM POLITICS. HIS MOVEMENT HAS BEEN ONE OF PROTEST AND HAS NOT EMPHASIZED CLEAR POLITICAL ALTERNATIVES. IT HAS MAINLY REVOLVED AROUND HIS PERSONAL MORAL IMAGE. CONGRESS NOW APPEARS TO BE REINFORCING ITS EFFORTS TO TAINT HIM WITH THE OPPOSITION PARTY BRUSH. HIS NOVEMBER 25-26 MEETING WITH OPPOSITION PARTIES MAY FORMALIZE THEIR ASSOCIATION WITH HIS MOVEMENT, AS THE JANA SANGH POLITICIAN MENTIONED ABOVE HOPED. IF MRS. GANDHI CHOOSES TO GO TO THE POLLS EARLY IN 1975, AN ELECTION CAMPAIGN WOULD CONSTITUTE ANOTHER PRESSURE ON NARAYAN TO DEFINE HIS PROGRAMS AND OBJECTIVES IN CLEARER POLITICAL TERMS THAN HERETOFORE. IN SHORT, NARAYAN WILL INCREASINGLY BE DRAWN INTO THE POLITICAL FRAY.

7. IT IS NOTE WORTHY THAT THE NARORA CONFERENCE'S FINAL RESOLUTION ENLIVENED THE QUESTION OF WHETHER MRS. GANDHI WILL CALL EARLY ELECTIONS IN 1975. THE RESOLUTION CALLED FOR A NUMBER OF SPECIFIC, WIDE-RANGING PROGRAMS TO ASSIST THE HARIJAN, TRIBAL AND LANDLESS LABOR COMMUNITIES THAT CONGRESS TRADITIONALLY COUNTS ON DURING ELECTIONS. ACCORDING TO THE RESOLUTION, THE PROGRAMS ARE TO BE COMPLETED BY A MID-FEBRUARY DEADLINE. THIS COINCIDES WITH THE PERIOD (LATE FEBRUARY OR MARCH) IN WHICH THE  
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COUNTRY WILL GO THE THE POLLS IF EARLY ELECTIONS ARE HELD. THE RESOLUTION FOLLOWS OTHER RECENT INDICATIONS THAT MRS. GANDHI IS KEEPING HER OPTIONS OPEN WITH RESPECT TO NEW ELECTIONS, INCLUDING THE RECENT COUNTRY-WIDE POSTPONEMENT OF DISTRICT CONGRESS COMMITTEE AND THE CANCELLATION OF THE ANNUAL CONGRESS AICC SESSION SCHEDULED FOR FEBRUARY 1975. THERE ARE TECHNICAL (AND CONSTITUTIONAL) OBSTACLES TO AN EARLY ELECTION (MAINLY THE REQUIRED ELIMINATION OF ELECTION DISTRICTS) BUT NONE WHICH MRS. GANDHI'S PENCHANT FOR LEGISLATION BY PRESIDENTIAL ORDINANCE COULD NOT OVERCOME.  
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